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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3340
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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 0601

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DHS FOR ICE, CBP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KTIP](#) [ASEC](#) [ELAB](#) [KCRM](#) [KFRD](#) [KWMN](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [SMIG](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES: INPUT FOR THE 2009 TRAFFICKING IN
PERSONS REPORT

REF: A. STATE 132759 (PREPARING THE NINTH ANNUAL TIP REPORT)
[1](#)B. 08 MANILA 2366 (ZAMBOANGA COURT CONVICTS HUMAN TRAFFICKER)
[1](#)C. 08 MANILA 2324 (MANILA AIRPORT OPENS NEW SHELTER FOR TRAFFICKING
VICTIMS)
[1](#)D. 08 MANILA 1563 (FIRST TIP CONVICTION IN 2008)
[1](#)E. 08 MANILA 951 (STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS TO COMBAT TIP)
[1](#)F. 08 MANILA 333 (ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS IN MINDANAO)

[1](#)1. (U) This cable includes the Mission's input for the 2008
Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. The information and statistics
cover the period from March 2008 to February 2009, unless otherwise
noted. The Mission's TIP point of contact is Political Officer
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Estimated completion time for report: SFS officer: 2 hours; FS-01
officers: 2 hours; FS-02 officers: 8 hours; FS-03 officers: 45
hours; FSN: 60 hours.

OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTRY'S ACTIVITIES

[1](#)2. (SBU) The answers below are keyed to the format contained in ref
A, para 23:

[1](#)A. SOURCES OF INFORMATION: The Philippine government has no central
database of trafficking information, but there are plans to
introduce one in 2009. Various government agencies and
non-governmental organizations currently document cases of TIP
generated from case studies, the number of beneficiaries of programs
extended to trafficking victims, and actual cases filed or incidents
reported to law enforcement agencies. UNICEF supported the
government's Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in Persons
(IACAT) in its plans to create a database to unify all the data
maintained by the different government agencies. During the
reporting period, IACAT and its partner agencies consolidated
efforts toward the completion of the database, which is expected to
be fully operational by June 2009.

Sources of information in the preparation of this report include the
following Philippine government agencies: the Department of Foreign
Affairs (DFA); the Department of Justice (DOJ); the Department of
Social Welfare and Development (DSWD); the Department of Labor and
Employment (DOLE); the Department of Interior and Local Government

(DILG); the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI); the Bureau of Immigration (BI); the Philippine National Police (PNP); the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA); and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). The following NGOs also provided significant input: the Visayan Forum Foundation (VFF); The Asia Foundation (TAF); International Justice Mission (IJM); Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Asia Pacific (CATW-AP); and the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP). Some information stemmed from media reports.

1B. TRAFFICKING OVERVIEW:

The Philippines is primarily an origin, and to a lesser extent, a destination and transit country of men, women, and children trafficked internationally for sexual exploitation and forced labor.

In a 2006 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report on global patterns of trafficking, the Philippines ranked "high" in the citation index as a country of origin of trafficked persons. Trafficking also occurs within the country's borders. Estimates of various non-government and international organizations vary significantly -- some putting the number of Philippine citizens trafficked internally, into Southeast Asia, and beyond, at thousands each year. Aside from working in the commercial sex industry, many trafficked persons work as domestic servants, as well as in unsafe and exploitative industries as forced labor.

Foreign trafficking rings brought the victims to destinations throughout Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and Africa.

In 2008, foreign service posts of the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs reported that the majority of trafficking victims rescued were from Malaysia and Singapore, while a smaller number of

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victims were rescued from Brunei, Hong Kong, Lebanon, Saipan, South Africa, Thailand, and United Arab Emirates. The Philippines was only occasionally a destination point for internationally trafficked individuals. Anecdotal reports indicated evidence of trafficking of women into the Philippines from China, Eastern Europe, and Russia for the purpose of sexual exploitation. International organized crime gangs also transited trafficked persons from mainland China through the Philippines to third country destinations.

Women face a far greater risk of becoming victims of trafficking than men, and girls are more at risk than boys. Trafficking in children is generally internal: children and young women from poor farming communities in the Visayas (the central Philippines) and Mindanao (the southern Philippines) are brought to major urban centers and employed as domestic helpers, factory workers, or prostitutes. Ethnic minorities, migrant workers, and other socially marginalized groups are more at risk than other groups due to the high prevalence of poverty among them.

In 2008, law enforcement agencies reported 168 alleged trafficking cases to the Department of Justice, leading prosecutors to file 97 cases in court, compared to 59 the prior year. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) provided services to 366 victims of trafficking or potential victims of trafficking, 220 victims of prostitution, 136 victims of child labor, and 67 victims of pedophilia or child pornography, compared to the provision of services to a total of only 158 victims in 2007. Philippine Foreign Service Posts reported a total of 74 cases of trafficking involving 217 victims. The NGO Visayan Forum Foundation, aided by its significant network expansion during the reporting period, intercepted 17,938 potential victims of trafficking at major seaports in the country and on seafaring vessels, ultimately leading to the rescue approximately 2,500 trafficking victims, 66 percent more than the 1,512 serviced by VFF in 2007.

The Philippines has a large, impoverished, relatively uneducated, and culturally diverse population, spread across thousands of islands, many of which experience annual, large-scale natural disasters, holding back farmers and urban poor from an ever-elusive prosperity. Geographical barriers, the remoteness of some rural communities, and the lack of infrastructure have for decades impeded the provision of basic government services to millions of Filipinos.

An ineffective judiciary, with its huge caseloads, limited

resources, significant judgeship vacancy rate, and grossly inefficient procedures, must still dispense justice. All these factors combine to make the Philippines a ripe location for human trafficking; these same factors also make human trafficking in the Philippines an extraordinary challenge to overcome.

However, within this difficult environment, the Philippine government has persistently mobilized resources to combat trafficking in a manner unparalleled on any other human rights issue faced by the country. Through the initiative of forward-thinking government agencies and dedicated bureaucrats, government bodies at the national, regional, provincial, and local levels are increasingly focused on anti-trafficking efforts, through anti-trafficking councils, law enforcement task forces, and other mechanisms. Despite limited resources, the Philippine government on the whole has demonstrated resilience and creativity in improving awareness of human trafficking, expanding prevention activities, and protecting victims. The following highlights from 2008 represent the government's continued commitment to fight trafficking:

- The creation of a new interagency, anti-illegal recruitment task force, led by the Vice President;

- The filing of 97 trafficking cases under the anti-TIP law by the Department of Justice, compared to just 59 cases filed in 2007, a 64 percent increase in cases filed;

- A 150 percent increase over 2007 in the number of anti-trafficking agreements signed with local government units;

- The drafting of model ordinances to be used by local government units in combating TIP and protecting the rights of trafficked

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children; and

- The filing of the government's first anti-TIP case on foreign soil, against a Singapore national who trafficked hundreds of Filipinas to Malaysia.

While there was no increase in the number of trafficking convictions over last year, it is essential to broaden the view of the Philippines' achievements beyond the simple counting of convictions.

We are aware that much work remains to be done on TIP in the Philippines; there is no shortage of areas for improvement. However, even as Post repeatedly calls on the government to do more to stop human trafficking and to increase convictions, we must also recognize that tremendous progress continues to be made.

1C. UNDERSTANDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE PHILIPPINES: Endemic poverty, a high unemployment and underemployment rate, a cultural propensity to seek higher living standards elsewhere, a weak rule of law environment, and a flourishing sex tourism industry all contributed to the continuation of trafficking in the Philippines. Persons were trafficked from poor, rural areas throughout the Philippines to major urban areas within the country, especially Metro Manila and Cebu, but also increasingly to cities in Mindanao. A significant percentage of the victims of internal trafficking were from the Visayas and Mindanao and were fleeing poverty or violence. Following clashes between the military and the separatist group Moro Islamic Liberation Front that began in August, the Visayan Forum Foundation reported an increase in the number of women and children in Mindanao being trafficked for domestic work. In 2008, 56 percent of the trafficking victims rescued by the Visayan Forum were from Mindanao. Victims of internal trafficking work as domestic servants or small-factory workers, as well as in the drug trade and in the commercial sex industry. They were often subject to violence, threats, debt bondage, inhumane living conditions, non-payment of salaries, and withholding of documents.

1D. VULNERABILITY TO TIP: Traffickers most often targeted the multitudes of workers seeking overseas and urban employment. About 1.3 million Philippine workers departed the country to engage in temporary overseas work assignments in all parts of the world in 2008, leaving at the rate of 3,000 to 3,800 per day. An estimated 11 percent of Gross Domestic Product came from workers' remittances.

The most common recruits for trafficking were girls and young women aged 13 to 30 from rural areas, mainly from impoverished families. Girls from ethnic minorities as young as ten years old also ended up as commercial sex workers.

1E. TRAFFICKERS AND THEIR METHODS: Traffickers usually sent female recruiters to their own neighborhoods or villages to recruit friends or relatives, providing the victims a false sense of security. Traffickers often masqueraded as private employment recruiters, while actually cooperating with organized crime rings. The most common method to approach victims was to promise respectable and lucrative jobs with good benefits, such as free room and board, transportation, and cash advances. Parents and guardians were often supportive, believing that work abroad is the key to ascending the socio-economic ladder.

NGOs suggested that organized crime syndicates, including syndicates from Japan, were heavily involved in the sex industry in Manila. Employment agencies were involved in much of the trafficking both within the country and to overseas destinations. They may also have had a role in trafficking of persons into the country. Some of these agencies may have also undertaken legitimate recruitment of personnel, making it particularly challenging to identify illegal recruitment, as the line between legitimate and illegitimate agencies was blurred. Other recruiters may have been relatives or neighbors, while some parents and guardians sold their children into bondage. In many cases, trafficking syndicates used women in their mid-40s or older to seek out victims, feeding many victims' perception that older women were less likely to harm them.

Traffickers used land and sea transportation to transfer victims from island provinces to major cities within the country. The system of ferries and barges connecting the islands from Mindanao to

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Luzon was the most common and cheapest mode of travel used by traffickers to transport victims. Traffickers also took advantage of budget airline carriers to transport victims out of the country. Traffickers used fake travel documents, falsified permits, and altered birth certificates.

GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-TIP EFFORTS

1A. GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PROBLEM: The government acknowledges trafficking as a serious problem and actively took steps to combat trafficking in the country. President Arroyo and her administration frequently spoke out in public about the harms of trafficking and the efforts of the government to combat TIP, making clear the government has zero tolerance for TIP in any form. Senior officials also stressed that the government would not condone official complicity in such trafficking. Several cabinet-level agencies and sub-agencies actively worked to combat trafficking in the Philippines.

Calling more attention to the issue of human trafficking and illegal recruitment, President Arroyo appointed Vice President Noli De Castro in October to lead a new interagency anti-illegal recruitment task force to arrest recruiters who victimize overseas-bound Filipinos (see paragraph 6.C below).

1B. AGENCIES INVOLVED IN ANTI-TIP WORK: The Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in Persons (IACAT) coordinated, monitored, and oversaw the implementation of the anti-trafficking law (Republic Act 9208 of 2003), and served as an umbrella organization to coordinate anti-TIP efforts. The Secretaries of Justice and of Social Welfare and Development co-chaired the IACAT. Other member agencies included Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, National Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Immigration, and Philippine National Police. Three non-government organizations representing women, children, and overseas workers were also part of the IACAT.

Government agencies' efforts to combat human trafficking included:

-- The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) extended assistance to victims of trafficking abroad and oversaw the voluntary repatriation of victims. It acted as the central coordinating unit for all bilateral, regional, and multilateral efforts. The DFA's Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) chairs the interagency Presidential Task Force on Human Trafficking which conducts surveillance and entrapment operations in coordination with law enforcement and immigration agencies, conducts community education, and provides legal and psycho-social services to trafficking victims. CFO also assists in the filing of cases against traffickers. In coordination with Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the DFA, through its Philippine embassies, took the lead in protecting the rights of migrant workers abroad. Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs), the overseas operating arm of DOLE, were under the supervision of the Philippine Chief of Mission or Ambassador.

-- The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) focused on the protection of victims and was the responsible agency for the social reintegration of victims of trafficking. DSWD operated 42 temporary shelters for victims of abuse throughout the country, including for victims of human trafficking. In addition to DSWD's services within the Philippines, social workers were deployed to the Philippine diplomatic missions in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait City, and Riyadh to provide psycho-social counseling to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in distress. These social workers coordinated the provision of services with POLOs.

-- The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) was responsible for coordinating the government's campaign against illegal recruitment, and for maintaining records of overseas Filipino workers. It ensured the strict implementation of, and compliance with, the rules and guidelines on the employment of persons locally and overseas.

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DOLE conducted outreach activities across the country to discourage business owners from employing children. It also monitored, documented, and reported cases of trafficking in persons involving employers and labor recruiters. DOLE led the "Sagip Batang Manggagawa" (Rescue the Child Workers, or SBM) program, an interagency quick action mechanism composed of DOLE, Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and DSWD. DOLE officers worked as labor attaches at Philippine diplomatic missions and spent much of their time assisting overseas workers. Thirty-nine labor attaches served at thirty-four POLOs around the world at Philippine diplomatic missions.

-- The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), an attached agency of DOLE, had responsibility for protecting overseas workers and their dependents. It provided counseling and legal assistance programs to overseas workers and conducted information dissemination and awareness campaigns on living and working overseas. In countries with large numbers of OFWs, an OWWA officer often served as Assistant Labor Attache.

-- The Department of Justice was responsible for protecting the rights of victims of trafficking and prosecuting traffickers. It also offered free legal assistance for trafficked persons in coordination with the DSWD and NGOs. After the passage of the anti-trafficking law in May 2003, DOJ established the Task Force on Anti-Trafficking in Persons. The DOJ has assigned responsibility to 20 prosecutors who, in addition to their regular workloads, handle the preliminary investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases at the national level. Approximately 95 prosecutors in regional, provincial, and municipal DOJ offices also handle cases of trafficking in persons. DOJ continued to lead the government's anti-trafficking efforts, with the Secretary of Justice acting as Chair of the government's anti-TIP coordinating body, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in Persons (IACAT).

-- The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Philippine National Police (PNP), and the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) worked to identify, investigate, and dismantle trafficking operations and prosecute offenders. The NBI created a task force focused solely on investigating trafficking allegations, a task

force on the protection of women against exploitation and abuse, and a task force on the protection of children from exploitation and abuse.

-- The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) conducted systematic information and prevention campaigns and, together with NAPOLCOM, created a databank in January 2008 for the efficient monitoring, documentation, and prosecution of cases, including trafficking.

-- The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) implemented national development plans for women and provided technical assistance to strengthen government's response to gender issues. It formulated and monitored policies on trafficking in persons in coordination with relevant government agencies. At the time of this report, NCRFW was conducting research on the demand for commercial sex. It was also preparing a definitive guide for government agencies on the protection of trafficking victims, scheduled for review by the IACAT in March 2009.

-- The Bureau of Immigration (BI) administered and enforced immigration and alien administration laws while adopting measures to apprehend suspected international traffickers at key entry and exit points. It ensured that Filipinos engaged or married to foreign nationals complied with the guidance and counseling requirements in the anti-trafficking law. BI also controlled and monitored border points by deploying deputized marines to help enforce immigration laws.

-- The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), affiliated with DOLE, was the primary administrator of licenses for recruitment agencies, which cannot solicit employees for overseas work without the permission of POEA. POEA had authority to place on probation or bar from recruiting new workers any agencies in violation of POEA standards. POEA also administered pre-employment

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orientation seminars and pre-departure counseling programs to applicants for overseas employment. An average of 3,000 citizens visited POEA's main office each day to seek overseas employment. POEA trained diplomatic staff, overseas labor officers, and social welfare officers in methods for assisting trafficking victims abroad. It also provided free legal assistance to trafficking victims. In December 2006, POEA issued new employment requirements for overseas Filipino household workers better to protect them from widespread employer abuse and human trafficking. The new requirements increased the monthly minimum wage from 200 to 400 USD and raised the minimum age of eligibility from 18 to 23.

-- Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC) collected information for the effective monitoring, documentation, and prosecution of trafficking cases of foreign nationals.

1C. LIMITATIONS ON GOVERNMENT EFFORTS: The Philippines remains one of the poorest countries in Asia. The government's ability to address the trafficking problem and provide assistance to its victims remained limited by inadequate resources, including for police. Corruption in the government and the general ineffectiveness of the judicial system were also factors that impeded the government's ability to prosecute trafficking cases. The lack of resources and high judgeship vacancy rate in the judiciary significantly slowed trial times. A 2005 UN Development Program (UNDP) and Philippine Supreme Court study found that the average trial takes over three years; in practice, many trials take longer. Some government agencies and offices have not yet fully implemented the 2003 anti-trafficking law due to lack of training and orientation on the scope and magnitude of the problem.

National and international NGOs and other foreign donors (including the USG) complemented official government programs. NGOs focused anti-trafficking resources primarily on prevention and protection for overseas Filipino workers. The strongest efforts existed in the areas of helping to prevent persons from becoming victims, repatriating victims in destination countries, and reintegrating them into Philippine society upon their return home.

1D. MONITORING ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS: The government had no central database of trafficking information, but IACAT planned to introduce a comprehensive national database in June 2009 in a UNICEF-sponsored project. Several agencies maintained their own separate databases, but many of these databases did not focus exclusively on trafficking. The Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC) collected information on transnational crime activities, but its records were not comprehensive. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), an attached agency of the DFA, developed a database to monitor legal problems involving Filipinos overseas, but its system was not restricted to trafficking and also generated reports on other cases such as domestic violence and human smuggling. The CFO plans to integrate this information into a shared government database on migration. The National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) maintained a database of national crime statistics, including trafficking cases, based on the quarterly reports from PNP. As of this report writing, only one-fifth of nationwide criminal cases had been entered into the system. The system is not yet a reliable source of trafficking data.

The IACAT and government task forces involved in anti-TIP activities met regularly to share information and coordinate policies. Government officials also met regularly with concerned NGOs, foreign donors, embassies, and regional and international organizations to share information and assessments, but all agreed solid data about the extent of the problem remained difficult to obtain.

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS

14. (SBU) The answers below are keyed to the format contained in ref A, para 25.

1A. EXISTING LAWS AGAINST TIP: The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (Republic Act 9208) is the Philippines' landmark legislation to

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protect women and children from sexual exploitation and forced labor. The law affirmed the government's resolve to prevent and suppress the illegal trade in persons, especially women and children, and carried penalties not only against traffickers but also against users or buyers of victims. Under the law, the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a minor for the purpose of exploitation was enough to file a case against a trafficker. It is not necessary to show that such acts were made through threats, use of force, or other coercive measures. The law penalizes both internal and transnational trafficking.

In addition to the anti-trafficking law, the government used several laws to prosecute traffickers, including: the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act (Republic Act 8042), which gave the government the authority to combat illegal recruiting; the Mail-Order Bride Law (Republic Act 6955), which made it unlawful for foreign men to marry Filipino women for the purpose of exploitation; the Inter-Country Adoption Act of 1995 (Republic Act 8043), which sought to protect Filipino children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and/or sale; the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act (Republic Act 7610), which established penalties for child exploitation, including child trafficking; and the Anti-Child Labor Law (Republic Act 9231), which guaranteed the protection, health, and safety of child workers and prohibited the employment of children below the age of 15, except when granted special permission by DOLE.

1B. PUNISHMENT OF SEX TRAFFICKING OFFENSES: The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 imposed harsh penalties on persons engaged in trafficking for sexual exploitation. The law distinguished between three types of violations: direct participation in trafficking; acts that promoted trafficking; and more serious acts of trafficking, called "qualified" trafficking. The penalty for a direct act was a fine of P1 million to P2 million (20,777 to 41,554 USD) and up to 20 years imprisonment. Promotion of trafficking through falsification of documents and tampering with certificates carried up to 15 years imprisonment and a fine of P500,000 to P1 million (10,388 to 20,777

USD). The maximum penalty applied where the victim was a child, trafficking was conducted on a large scale, or the crime involved military or law enforcement agencies and public officers or employees, resulting in life imprisonment and a fine of P2 million to P5 million (41,554 to 103,385 USD). Those who engaged the services of trafficked persons for prostitution faced penalties of between six months of community service and a fine of P50,000 (1,039 USD) to a maximum of one year imprisonment and a fine of P100,000 (2,078 USD).

The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 law prescribes the same penalties for trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation, prostitution, pornography, forced labor, slavery, involuntary servitude, or debt bondage.

C. PUNISHMENT FOR LABOR TRAFFICKING OFFENSES: The anti-trafficking law clearly states it is illegal to recruit, transport, transfer, harbor, provide, or receive a person by any means, including under the pretext of domestic or overseas employment, training, or apprenticeship, for the purpose of prostitution, pornography, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, involuntary servitude, or debt bondage. Activities that promoted or facilitated trafficking could result in imprisonment of up to 15 years and a fine between P500,000 to P1 million (10,388 to 20,777 USD). There have been no convictions for trafficking for forced labor.

The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (Republic Act 8042) regulates the recruitment and deployment of Filipinos for overseas work. The law imposes a jail term of six to 12 years and a fine of P200,000 to P500,000 (4,155 to 10,388 USD) for recruiters and placement agencies that are not registered with the POEA, and for recruiters, whether registered or not, who place workers in jobs harmful to health and morality, or alter employment contracts to the detriment of the worker.

In 2008, POEA filed 318 administrative cases against licensed labor recruiters who used fraudulent and deceptive offers to entice

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jobseekers or imposed inappropriately high or illegal fees on prospective employees. During the reporting period, the Supreme Court and the local courts of the cities of Makati, Baguio, Malolos, and San Fernando issued convictions for illegal recruitment in seven POEA-endorsed and monitored cases.

D. PENALTIES FOR RAPE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT: Under the Anti-Rape Law of 1997 (Republic Act 8353), the penalty for rape is life imprisonment. Under the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 (Republic Act 7877), any person who is convicted of violating the provisions of the Act shall face imprisonment of not less than one month and no more than six months, be fined up to P20,000 (415 USD), or face both a fine and imprisonment.

E. LAW ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS: Since the passage of the 2003 anti-trafficking law, the Department of Justice has convicted 12 people under the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003. The government made progress in combating trafficking in 2008, particularly in the areas of law enforcement coordination and victim protection and assistance. In 2008, law enforcement agencies reported 168 new trafficking cases to DOJ for review. Of these, 97 were filed in court as trafficking cases, compared to only 59 cases filed in court in 2007. Of the other cases received by DOJ in 2008, 3 were filed in court as violations of other related penal laws, 35 were pending preliminary investigation, 29 cases were dropped or dismissed, and one case was archived due to lack of progress on the investigation. Since 2003, DOJ has filed in court a total of 288 cases of human trafficking, of which one-third were filed in 2008.

During the reporting period, Philippine courts convicted four individuals in three cases under the 2003 anti-trafficking law. One trafficker received a life sentence after the courts found her guilty of "qualified trafficking" of minors for prostitution, while the traffickers in the other cases were each sentenced to 20 years in prison. In the June 30 ruling in Batangas City, the judge also ordered the trafficker to pay a fine of 50,000 USD. The judges in the October 10 ruling in Zamboanga City and in the November 27

ruling in Paranaque City ordered the traffickers to pay fines of 25,000 USD. The convicted traffickers all remained in jail serving their sentences, including two of the traffickers who are appealing their convictions.

Despite the DOJ's intensified efforts to prosecute and convict traffickers, the majority of cases continued to drag because of an overburdened judicial system. The judicial process on average takes three years from the filing of charges to resolution of a case.

Under certain circumstances and with approval of the court, Philippine law permitted private attorneys to prosecute cases under the direction and control of a public prosecutor. These "private prosecutors" serve on behalf of the victims in court proceedings. The government used this provision effectively, allowing and supporting International Justice Mission (IJM) and other NGOs that provide legal assistance to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases. IJM's two offices in Manila and Cebu filed a total of 21 new criminal cases of trafficking in 2008 and had more than 50 cases in various stages of arraignment or trial. Three of the four nationwide trafficking convictions in 2008 were a result of cases by filed by IJM for the victims in two separate cases of human trafficking.

The government actively investigated cases of trafficking-related offenses, but was hampered by scarce resources. The principal investigative agencies were BI, NBI, and PNP. At PNP, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the Women and Children's Concerns Division handled most trafficking cases. In 2008, PNP investigated 55 cases of trafficking involving women and children. Of these, 18 cases were filed in court and 37 were filed with prosecutors' offices to undergo preliminary investigation.

The Philippine Center for Transnational Crime investigated six cases of trafficking involving 24 victims. One case was referred to the local prosecutor for further investigation. The NBI's Anti-Human Trafficking Division investigated 130 complaints of trafficking, of which 112 were under investigation and seven were filed with DOJ for

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potential prosecution. The BI ensured that all foreign nationals within its territorial jurisdiction complied with existing laws to ensure the protection of women and children against commercial sexual exploitation. BI's interceptions at Philippine airports were typically referred to NBI for further investigation.

Other government agencies also investigated cases of trafficking. During the reporting period, the Task Force Against Trafficking at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila assisted a total of 37 trafficked victims from Malaysia, Kuwait, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Syria. Twenty four of the victims filed complaints with the police and the NBI. The POEA assisted trafficking victims in the proper filing of cases in court, filing four cases of trafficking, two cases of forced labor, and two cases of commercial sexual exploitation. POEA assisted in the arrest of approximately 90 individuals involved in illegal recruitment, representing a 300 percent increase in POEA-assisted arrests over the prior year. DOLE conducted 17 rescue operations involving 25 minors, 19 of whom were trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and the rest for forced labor.

According to the POEA, criminal cases against traffickers and illegal recruiters were assisted by an improved intelligence network at the barangay level, in part achieved through a significant expansion of POEA training to Public Employment Service Managers in communities throughout the country (see paragraph F below).

1**F. TRAINING FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS:** Government agencies continued to increase the frequency of TIP training and orientation efforts. Programs included training for thousands of officials, including prosecutors, judges, NBI investigators, local government units, and city councilors. In March 2008, the IACAT, with the support from USAID's Rule of Law Effectiveness Program, and through the Filipino Initiative Against Trafficking in Northern Mindanao (Caraga Region), conducted a series of activities including training of prosecutors, law enforcers and social workers, on effective coordination in the

investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases. The USG, UNICEF, and other donors also supported training of police officers and prosecutors. IACAT also conducted UNICEF-supported training for prosecutors in December 2008.

In 2008 POEA signed 130 memorandums of agreement with local government units across the country and trained local officials and Public Employment Service Managers how to educate Filipinos on seeking overseas employment, including identifying the warning signs of illegal recruitment and human trafficking. The number of memorandums signed in 2008 represents a 150 percent increase over the number of memorandums signed in 2007. Officials in communities that do not yet have agreements with POEA actively seek out POEA's popular training program.

The PCTC conducted training on upgrading its personnel's skills in combating transnational crimes, including trafficking.

1G. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: The government cooperated with other countries in the investigation and prosecution of TIP cases, particularly in cases with Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand, and the United States. In November 2008, IACAT filed criminal charges for trafficking against a Singaporean recruiter, Lim Beng Wat, who is based in Kuala Lumpur. The suspect was said to have victimized hundreds of Filipino women who were promised work in Malaysia but ended up as slaves and were sexually exploited and maltreated. This is the first attempt of the Philippine government to initiate a case of human trafficking against a foreign national and the first Philippines' case to be prosecuted on foreign soil. The number of cooperative international investigations on trafficking was not available because there was no central database linking the various law enforcement agencies. The Philippines had treaties on mutual legal assistance on criminal matters with Australia and the United States. The Philippines was also a signatory to the ASEAN Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty to share information and evidence among ASEAN member-states.

The Philippines participated in other international efforts to prevent, monitor, and control trafficking. DSWD is one of the

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partner agencies in the implementation of an International Labour Organization (ILO) trafficking project that addresses the lack of systematic documentation of trafficked victims, absence of an effective referral system, and inadequate competencies of service providers in recovery and reintegration services for victims.

Philippine law enforcement agencies actively cooperate with U.S. Mission officials on investigations of visa fraud schemes perpetrated by fixers, smugglers, and human traffickers. A typical baiting scheme involves Filipino nurses who pay a fee to an agency that guarantees them high-paying nursing work in the U.S. Upon arrival in the U.S., they are told there are no nursing jobs and are instead given work as nursing attendants or nurses' aides caring for the elderly, at salaries that are dramatically lower than what they were offered. In other schemes, recruiters will charge low fees to find high-paying work in the U.S. for unskilled Filipinas. Upon arrival in the U.S., these women are told they have accrued significant debts and are coerced into commercial sex in massage parlors or as escorts to repay these "debts."

1H. EXTRADITIONS: Philippine law permits extradition, and the Philippines had extradition treaties with Australia, Canada, the Federated States of Micronesia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United States. Under the terms of the 2003 anti-trafficking law, trafficking in persons is considered an extraditable offense. However, the government received no extradition requests for trafficking offenders, foreign or national, during the reporting period.

1I. GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT AND/OR TOLERANCE: Government officials at all levels publicly stated their commitment to combat trafficking in the Philippines. While there was no evidence that the government, as an institution, tolerated, permitted or allowed trafficking crimes, widespread corruption at all levels of government permitted many organized crime groups, including traffickers, to conduct their

illegal activities. Corruption among law enforcement agents remained pervasive. At the street level, it was not uncommon for officers to demand petty bribes for minor offenses, real or alleged. Law enforcement officers often extracted protection money in exchange for permitting businesses to conduct legitimate operations without necessary permits, or for illegitimate businesses, such as brothel owners or gambling and drug lords. It is widely believed that some government officials are involved in, or at least permit, trafficking operations within the country.

J. EFFORTS TO INVESTIGATE AND PROSECUTE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN TRAFFICKING: In February 2007, the Task Force Against Trafficking at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), an inter-agency task force composed of DOJ, BI, Customs, Airport Police and the Manila International Airport Authority, was formed to combat trafficking at the airport by intercepting undocumented passengers, assisting trafficking victims, and monitoring reported involvement of airport personnel. On September 17, an officer of the Bureau of Immigration at Ninoy Aquino International Airport was apprehended for her alleged role in aiding the trafficking of 17 Mindanao minors to Syria and Jordan. On October 22, a city prosecutor dismissed the charge against the officer for insufficient evidence, but filed trafficking charges against two accomplices. Because of reports of alleged collusion of government officials and immigration employees with organized trafficking syndicates, the Bureau of Immigration instituted a number of preventive measures at the airports, including prohibition of immigration officers from carrying mobile phones on duty and regular rotation of officers at assigned counters. The case of police officer Dennis Reci, charged in June 2005 for allegedly trafficking minors for sexual exploitation at his nightclub in Manila, was still ongoing at the time of this report. Reci remained under detention.

In January 2009, the Office of the Ombudsman formalized the Tanodbayan (Ombudsman) Against Government Employees Involved in Trafficking (TARGET), composed of special investigators and prosecutors tasked to investigate cases against government officials engaged in trafficking in persons or trafficking-related corruption. The Office of the Ombudsman conducted a study to identify areas

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where government procedures were particularly vulnerable to corruption and human trafficking, and expressed commitment to investigate enforcement gaps. During the reporting period, TARGET conducted fact-finding investigations on four government personnel allegedly involved in trafficking cases.

K. PROSTITUTION. Prostitution is illegal and the activities of a prostitute are criminalized. Individuals engaged in the business of prostitution, such as the brothel owners/operators and pimps, also have criminal liability, but these laws are rarely enforced. There are no criminal laws specifically penalizing the clients of prostitutes. Various anti-prostitution bills that would penalize customers and define prostitution as exploitation remained pending in both houses of Congress.

L. INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING TROOPS: The Philippines has deployed a total of 626 military and police personnel in United Nations peacekeeping missions. During the reporting period, there were no reports of Philippine peacekeepers engaging in or facilitating trafficking.

M. CHILD SEX TOURISM: Child sex tourism continued to be a serious problem for the Philippines. Sex tourists reportedly came from Asia, Europe, and North America to engage in sexual activity with minors. In 2008, the Bureau of Immigration deported 10 foreign sex offenders and pedophiles. The government also cooperated with the U.S. in prosecuting American nationals under the terms of the U.S. PROTECT Act of 2003, which criminalized the commission of child abuse by American nationals overseas, including child pornography and other sexual offenses against a minor. At the end of the reporting period, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security had a total of 17 PROTECT Act cases in collaboration with the Philippine government. Of the 17 cases, three were pending prosecution in the Philippines, including

one case of trafficking; one case was pending in California; five other cases were under investigation; and eight were closed with no further action.

PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

15. (SBU) The answers below are keyed to the format contained in ref A, para 26.

1A. VICTIM AND WITNESS PROTECTION: Under the Witness Protection, Security, and Benefit Program, the DOJ offered protection to witnesses from reprisals and economic dislocation by providing security protection, immunity from criminal prosecution, housing, livelihood expenses, travel expenses, medical benefits, education for dependents, and job security. Due to lack of resources to fund the program, many who would have liked to participate could not, and, according to one NGO's report, some applications for witness protection were still pending with a regional DOJ office more than a year after being filed. Many other potential witnesses may not have been aware of the existence of this program. In addition to the halfway houses, VFF also ran two safehouses in Manila and Legazpi for longer protective custody of victims, especially for those who decided to take legal action against traffickers.

1B. ACCESS TO FACILITIES: The Philippines has shelters that are accessible to trafficking victims, including some shelters that over time have become exclusively dedicated to the needs of TIP victims, even though the shelters are not officially designated as such. DSWD maintained 42 residential care units; of these, 13 centers were for girls, 13 centers were for women, and the remaining for men, boys, and the elderly. Substitute homes, or havens, served the needs of female victims of trafficking and other forms of abuse. Twelve substitute homes provided shelter for over 1,400 women and their children. The DSWD's Residential Care unit provided 24-hour residential group care to children on a temporary basis to facilitate healing, recovery, and reintegration with their families and communities. The DSWD also referred cases of abuse to accredited NGOs for women and children, which provided temporary shelter and community services to women and children in crisis,

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including victims of trafficking. While DSWD's efforts to protect victims were impressive, government funding for DSWD's programs remained inadequate, and some NGOs sought to augment the TIP services and capabilities of the DSWD-operated shelters through training.

Crisis intervention and child protection units operated in many public hospitals throughout the country. The crisis units also provided telephone counseling, conducted rescue operations, and provided overnight facilities and referral services for longer-term shelters. Women and Children Protection Units in Department of Health (DOH) hospitals offered medical services and psychological counseling to victims of violence. The Philippine General Hospital in Manila evaluated and treated TIP victims on behalf of the government.

The government cooperated well with NGOs to support and provide services to trafficking victims. Philippine Ports Authority works closely with the Visayan Forum Foundation (VFF) and enables it to operate halfway houses for victims and potential victims of TIP. The Philippine Ports Authority's Gender and Development Focal Point Program, an agency under the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC), provided the building and amenities for a halfway house for dedicated use by trafficking victims. Activities of the halfway house staff included regular inspection of the different port areas, assistance to possible victims of traffickers and victims of illegal recruitment, information dissemination, and basic orientation seminars.

VFF currently operates shelters in Manila, Batangas, Davao, Sorsogon, and Zamboanga. During the reporting period, VFF opened additional halfway houses in Iloilo and Surigao.

In July 2006, VFF signed a 10-year agreement with the Manila International Airport Authority to establish an airport halfway house for TIP victims. In October 2008, the halfway house on airport property opened to serve victims and potential victims of human trafficking. Under this partnership, VFF also trains airport immigration and customs officials on how to identify potential victims of human trafficking.

VFF ran the Multi-Sectoral Network Against Trafficking in Persons (MSNAT) to promote cooperation and sustain partnership among government, NGOs, the private sector, and civil society. Government partners included the DOJ, DOLE, DFA, DILG, DSWD, National Police Commission, Philippine Ports Authority, and the Commission on Human Rights.

DSWD provided limited funding to accredited NGOs to help meet the basic needs of victims, such as food, clothing, medicine, and legal services. With assistance from DFA, DSWD established arrangements with NGOs in other countries to provide distressed OFWs with temporary shelter, counseling, and medical assistance.

1C. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO TRAFFICKING VICTIMS: The government assisted victims by providing shelter, and access to legal, medical, and psychological services. Medical and psychological services include physical examination, dental check-ups, and psychiatric evaluation. In general, NGOs cannot rely on government funding. They typically turn to foreign governments, foreign and domestic religious groups, third-country and multinational donor agencies, and private foundations for resources. However, the government remained highly aware of the value of NGOs in combating trafficking and routinely sought cooperation and input from them.

1D. ASSISTANCE TO FOREIGN TRAFFICKED VICTIMS: The Anti-Trafficking Law provides that foreign trafficked victims or trafficking victims who transit the Philippines are entitled to the same assistance and protections as Philippine citizens. The government provides temporary residency status, relief from deportation, shelter, and access to legal, medical, and psychological services to foreign victims of trafficking. Additional protective services included telephone hotlines for reporting abused/exploited cases of women and children. There were no reported foreign national victims of trafficking during the reporting period.

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1E. LONG-TERM BENEFITS: Although long-term housing is not provided to trafficking victims, DSWD does provide victims with livelihood skills development and self-employment assistance, including training in entrepreneurial skills and the provision of capital. DSWD also offers after-care services to reintegrate trafficking victims into their homes and communities.

F. REFERRAL PROCESS: The government referred trafficking victims to short-term and long-term care institutions, including both government and private institutions. The referral process varied depending on the location of the trafficking victim and the nature of the relationship between the government agencies and NGOs on anti-trafficking issues.

1G. TOTAL NUMBER OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS: There are no reliable government statistics on the total number of trafficking victims and the total number assisted with government services. DSWD data for 2008 show that the government served 366 trafficking victims, 136 victims of child labor, 287 victims of sexual exploitation including prostitution, pedophilia and pornography, and 85 victims of illegal recruitment. Due to inconsistent reporting mechanisms at DSWD field offices, the data may understate the number of victims serviced. During the reporting period, Philippine Foreign Service Posts reported a total of 74 cases of trafficking involving 217 victims. These cases were referred to the NBI and to the IACAT for investigation and, where warranted, the filing of complaints of human trafficking. Other government programs, some in cooperation with NGOs, referred victims to government or private services.

1H. LAW ENFORCEMENT IDENTIFICATION OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS: The implementing rules of the 2003 anti-trafficking law outlined

procedures to identify and refer victims of trafficking, whether the incident occurred inside or outside of the country. NGOs noted that training conducted by government agencies and NGOs during the year improved the government's overall awareness of the trafficking problem in the country and led to an improved ability on the part of the government to proactively identify traffickers, rescue their victims, and investigate cases. In a 2005 trafficking case, the testimony of a Batangas port official trained by an NGO to identify trafficking victims led to the first trafficking conviction in 2008.

A 2005 case in Zamboanga that led to the nation's first trafficking conviction also featured prosecutors trained in anti-trafficking strategies.

Victims of trafficking rescued within the country went under the custody of the DSWD for proper treatment. For cases overseas, consular officers and personnel from the POLO conducted visits to the jail, work site, or residence of the victim, and then provided temporary shelter as well as legal, financial, and repatriation assistance to the victims. Upon arrival in the Philippines, the DSWD, the NBI, or PNP provided psycho-social interventions, psychological and medical examinations, and therapy sessions, if necessary.

Port personnel referred victims, as well as domestic workers detained at port police stations, to the halfway houses run by the Visayan Forum Foundation (VFF). The DSWD also referred cases of physical and verbal abuse against domestic workers to VFF for psycho-social intervention and short-term care until repatriation of the victims. The VFF maintained five halfway houses in strategic port areas in Batangas, Manila, Davao, Sorsogon, and Zamboanga City.

VFF similarly coordinated with the PPA, DOLE, DSWD, shipping companies, and workers' groups. Halfway house staff provided direct services to trafficked victims in ports, including temporary shelter, referral, repatriation, and counseling.

I. THE RIGHTS OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS: The 2003 anti-trafficking law recognized trafficked persons as victims and did not penalize them for crimes related to the acts of trafficking or for obeying traffickers, regardless of their consent to exploitation. Police sometimes brought charges of vagrancy against prostitutes and trafficked victims.

J. VICTIM COOPERATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT: The government actively

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encouraged victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking and related crimes and to file criminal cases against traffickers and unscrupulous recruiters. Victims can file civil suits or seek legal action against traffickers. During the reporting period, thirteen trafficking victims cooperated in the filing of three anti-trafficking cases. Some victims declined the opportunity to participate in legal proceedings because of the financial or emotional cost of going to trial or because they settled out of court. Victims who agree to testify as witnesses are allowed to obtain other employment and are allowed to leave the country pending trial proceedings. The Secretary of Justice issued a DOJ Circular in 2005 instructing that all cases involving violations of the anti-trafficking law should receive preferential attention. The circular also ordered all prosecutors to reject calls by defense attorneys for dismissal of cases in which the victims recant their testimony.

Pursuant to the Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act, an all-female team of police officers, examining physicians, and prosecutors must handle investigations of offenses committed against women. In the case of trafficked children, the Special Protection of Children Act and the Rule on Examination of a Child Witness mandate that a single panel conduct victim interviews to avoid the potentially damaging effects of feeling re-victimized through repeated questioning. All fines paid by trafficking offenders accrue to a trust fund that IACAT administers, which it uses to prevent acts of trafficking, protect and rehabilitate victims, and reintegrate trafficked persons into the community.

K. TRAINING FOR OFFICIALS TO IDENTIFY AND PROTECT VICTIMS: The government, through IACAT and with funding from USAID and other

donors, conducted regular training seminars for government officials, including those from DSWD, PNP, DOJ, DFA, DOLE, Commission on Human Rights, and various NGOs, on gender-sensitive and child-friendly handling of trafficking cases.

The BI also conducted periodic training on basic immigration laws and procedures for immigration officers and agents in the field and other personnel involved in operations. Consular staff, Foreign Service officers, and attaches en route to foreign missions also received TIP training. ILO and the Department of Foreign Affairs Foreign Service Institute have developed an anti-trafficking in persons training module. This training module (in CD format) has benefitted 350 DFA Foreign Service officers and staff officers who were unable to undergo anti-trafficking training through PDOS in 2008.

L. ASSISTANCE FOR REPATRIATED TRAFFICKING VICTIMS: DFA, OWWA, and DSWD assisted repatriated Filipino workers who were victims of trafficking. The OWWA's Halfway Home program provided temporary shelter, transport services, financial assistance, and counseling services through a network of NGOs. The DSWD, working with DOLE and DOH, provided protective custody, recovery, and healing services for victims. Services included organization of support groups, psychological and psychiatric interventions, medical, legal and livelihood services, provision of limited financial assistance, and educational assistance.

M. GOVERNMENT COOPERATION WITH NGOS: The vibrant local and international NGO community in the Philippines included many organizations that work directly with trafficking victims. The most active contributors included:

-- Coalition Against Trafficking in Women - Asia Pacific (CATW-AP) is an international network of feminist groups, organizations, and individuals fighting the sexual exploitation of women. The coalition brings attention to trafficking in women and girls, prostitution, pornography, sex tourism, and bride selling through media campaigns and policy advocacy. It provides preventive education program on migration and trafficking at the community and grassroots level and conducts dialogues with government agencies such as the POEA, DOLE, and DSWD on preventive and curative measures. Its services include referring trafficking cases to member and partner organizations for legal, counseling and support services. It also documents trafficking cases based on the Human

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Rights Information and Documentation System used by a global network of organizations concerned with human rights issues.

-- Visayan Forum Foundation focuses on the promotion of child welfare, especially migrant working children, and is active on the issue of domestic trafficking of women and children. It provides 24-hour services for victims, including the operation of several temporary shelters, counseling, employment referrals, training, and advocacy. Staff positioned at port arrival areas identify and intercept probable victims of trafficking as they disembark ships. Through funding assistance from The Asia Foundation and the USG, VFF spearheaded the creation of the Multi-Sectoral Network Against Trafficking in Persons (MSNAT), a national network committed to provide immediate and appropriate response mechanisms to prevent trafficking, investigate and prosecute offenders, and protect, rescue, recover, and reintegrate victims, especially women and children.

-- The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) is the largest trade union network in the Philippines. The TUCP forges coalitions with various labor groups in its efforts to promote and protect the rights and welfare of workers and other disadvantaged groups, including women, youth, children, and migrant workers. TUCP's Women's Bureau is particularly active in anti-trafficking initiatives, such as public information and media campaigns, database collection and documentation, provision of legal assistance to victims through public attorneys' offices, and networking. With funding support from the American Center for International Labor Solidarity and the USG, TUCP completed a government database housed with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) to provide a uniform

reporting mechanism that conforms to National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) standards. TUCP worked with transportation unions and companies in 2008 to disseminate information on anti-trafficking initiatives and interdiction, signing MOAs with bus companies and two inter-island passenger lines, Sulpicio Lines and Trans-Asia. TUCP also implemented anti-trafficking orientation programs for seafarers and ticketing agents and other personnel for trafficking interventions. In February 2009, TUCP, in cooperation with the Bataan provincial government, launched the Bataan Task Force against Trafficking, that province's interagency body on anti-trafficking issues.

-- Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) addresses the concerns of Filipino women migrants in Japan as well as the growing number of Japanese-Filipino children (JFCs). Almost 90 percent of Filipino OFWs in Japan are female entertainers, making them vulnerable to trafficking and sexual exploitation. In coordination with its DAWN-Japan volunteers, DAWN-Philippines assists JFCs abandoned by their Japanese fathers.

-- Women's Legal Bureau (WLB) is a feminist legal NGO composed of lawyers, academics, and members of other professions. It provides legal services to victims and survivors of violence against women and conducts education and information campaigns to raise public awareness on women's issues. Other programs include representation of women in judicial proceedings, training of law enforcers and members of the legal profession on gender sensitivity, empowering communities to respond to feminist issues, especially those involving violence against women, and working with women's groups toward promoting human rights.

-- Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women (TWMAEW) addresses the needs of children and women in prostitution and other victims of sexual exploitation through shelters and support centers. It offers skills training, livelihood assistance, and psycho-social intervention. In collaboration with UNICEF and DepEd, it conducted awareness-raising campaigns on sexual abuse for 13,291 elementary school pupils. Social workers, educators, and survivors of sexual abuse facilitated the workshops.

-- Kanlungan Center Foundation (KCF) works with OFWs and their families in addressing the problems of migrant workers. It provides legal and welfare assistance, psycho-social counseling, temporary shelter, education, and training. Its educational lineup includes courses on basic migrants' orientation, migrant rights, legal

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remedies, and gender awareness and sensitivity. KCF also creates partnerships at the grassroots level to address the psycho-social and economic sides of migration that can impact communities.

-- End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) campaigns to raise general public awareness in tourism, the travel industry, and high-risk communities on the issue of children victims of sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. ECPAT is a member of the Special Committee for the Protection of Children under the DOJ and works with local government units in major provinces and cities, other NGOs, and church-based organizations.

PREVENTION

16. (SBU) The answers below are keyed to the format contained in ref A, para 27:

1A. PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS: Government agencies increased the frequency of their TIP information and education campaigns, mostly thanks to funding by bilateral international donor agencies.

-- In March 2008, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in Persons (IACAT), with support from USAID, conducted a "road show" campaign against human trafficking in the Caraga region of northeastern Mindanao. Aimed at raising awareness in communities, over 1,500 government and non-government organizations, church and

women's groups, students and the media from Butuan City and five provinces of the Caraga region participated in the road show, which educated thousands of Filipinos on the dangers of human trafficking and on how to avoid becoming victims.

-- In September and October 2008, the IACAT, with the Blas F. Ople Policy Research Center and the Visayan Forum Foundation, held campaigns entitled "We Are Not for Sale" at Manila International Airport and Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark, Pampanga. The campaign sought to educate immigration officers on the harm caused by their potential complicity in human trafficking and thereby prevent their collusion with traffickers. The campaign included sessions with immigration officers and trafficking victims.

During one of these sessions, some of the victim-speakers identified two immigration officers in the audience whom the victims claim had worked with their recruiters. The two immigration officers are now facing criminal and administrative charges.

-- In April 2008, The Asia Foundation and the Association of Broadcasters, through the support of USAID, aired anti-trafficking infomercials for 45 days on 34 radio stations in Metro Manila, Cebu, Samar, and Leyte.

-- During the reporting period, IACAT distributed hundreds of standard orientation modules on trafficking in persons to city and municipal mayors at an annual conference in Manila.

-- POEA conducted 1,235 pre-employment orientation seminars for 61,582 departing overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in 2008. These seminars sought to educate the OFWs on the risks and rewards of overseas employment. The seminar module included a video presentation on trafficking in persons.

--The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), in partnership with the IACAT, the Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and Their Children (IACVAWC), and the Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee (VAWCC), spearheaded an 18-day campaign from November 25 to December 2 to promote an end to violence against women. The campaign highlighted the roles of governments and citizens in curbing and responding sensitively to violence against women, including human trafficking.

1B. IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION PATTERNS: Approximately one million passengers transited Manila's North Harbor in 2008, the country's largest port; as many as half were in search of employment opportunities. Despite efforts to guard major port areas, the

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government did not have sufficient resources to adequately monitor its borders. With more than 7,000 islands, fully monitoring maritime borders was virtually impossible given the limited resources of the maritime services.

The Philippine Coast Guard, under the Department of Transportation and Communication, intercepted some ferries in order to identify trafficked victims and illegal recruiters in coordination with private shipping companies. The Maritime Police conducted investigations upon the disembarkation of passengers. It referred victims of trafficking to government agencies or local NGOs for further assistance.

Owners, managers, and key personnel of shipping companies conducted regular orientation and awareness seminars with their crews to educate them on ways to identify and report suspected trafficking victims onboard. Often, shipping companies assisted in facilitating the repatriation of minors by offering discounted fares.

In February 2007, IACAT established its first anti-trafficking task force at Manila's international airport. The Ninoy Aquino International Airport Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons included representatives from the Manila International Airport Authority, the Airport Police Department, BI, NBI, PNP, Pasay City Prosecutor's Office, POEA, Bureau of Customs, DFA, CFO, DSWD, and the Airline Operators Council. The Task Force, through USG assistance, helped improve information-sharing across agencies in order to improve the interception, investigation, and prosecution of

traffickers, as well as to coordinate immediate assistance to trafficking victims.

1C. COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES: The Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in Persons (IACAT), through its regular monthly meetings, coordinated, monitored, and oversaw the implementation of the Anti-TIP Law, and served as an umbrella organization to coordinate anti-TIP efforts in the Philippines. The DOJ and DSWD Secretaries co-chaired the IACAT, which also included representatives from DFA, DOLE, POEA, NCRFW, NBI, BI, and the PNP, as well as three NGOs representing women, children, and overseas Filipino workers. The DOJ allocated two million pesos (41,554 USD) for IACAT's 2009 activities, the first time IACAT has ever received a budget.

In addition to the national-level IACAT, the government continued to create local and regional inter-agency councils against TIP. The local IACATs similarly included various government agencies, local government units, and NGOs. As of 2008, there were 15 regional IACATs, 15 provincial IACATs, 17 city IACATs, and 34 municipal IACATs, in addition to other bodies that were not part of the formal IACAT structure. Alongside the local IACATs, local task forces in some hot spot areas coordinated law enforcement and prosecution efforts.

In 2008, IACAT expanded its efforts to standardize the government's approach to the problem of trafficking and the treatment of its victims. During the reporting period, IACAT drafted and approved guidelines for the protection of the rights of trafficked children and, in cooperation with NCRFW, drafted and approved similar guidelines for the protection and rights of women. IACAT also released a manual on the recovery and reintegration of trafficking victims and, with NCRFW, developed government performance standards for handling cases of violence against women, including trafficking. IACAT compiled local ordinances on trafficking and refined them into model ordinances for local government use in implementing anti-trafficking regulations at the local level.

The DFA's Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) chairs the interagency Presidential Task Force on Human Trafficking which conducts surveillance and entrapment operations in coordination with law enforcement and immigration agencies, conducts community education, and provides legal and psycho-social services to trafficking victims.

President Arroyo appointed Vice President Noli De Castro in October to lead a new interagency anti-illegal recruitment task force

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composed of the DFA, POEA, BI, and the CIDG. The task force intercepts overseas-bound Filipinos at risk for trafficking and arrests recruiters who victimize overseas-bound Filipinos. In the first five weeks of 2009, the task force intercepted approximately 50 Filipinos with fraudulent travel documents or suspicious itineraries who were at risk for trafficking. At the local level, Anti-Illegal Recruitment Coordinating Councils assisted government agencies to develop strategies to improve anti-illegal recruitment programs.

The DOJ led a National Task Force on the Protection of Women Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination, as well as a Task Force on Child Protection, to address cases of violence against women and children.

Local Councils for the Protection of Children existed at the provincial, city, municipality, and village levels to assist in identifying conditions related to child abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to facilitate immediate responses to reported cases of child abuse and exploitation.

Both the Office of the Ombudsman and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission pursued official corruption cases and coordinated the government's anti-corruption efforts.

1D. NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION TO ADDRESS TRAFFICKING: The government maintained its national action plan to address TIP, originally

developed with NGO input. IACAT lead the implementation of the plan involving DOJ, DSWD, DOLE, and other government agencies. All agencies involved in IACAT shared responsibilities for developing and implementing anti-trafficking programs. As co-chair of IACAT, DOJ ensured the protection of persons accused of trafficking, provided access to free government or NGO legal assistance, and trained prosecutors in handling trafficking-related cases. DSWD took the lead in implementing rehabilitative and protective programs for trafficked persons and providing victims with counseling and temporary shelter. DSWD also developed a system for accreditation among NGOs in order to establish centers and programs for intervention at the community level.

1E. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO REDUCE DEMAND FOR COMMERCIAL SEX ACTS: The government, given its limited resources, did not have specific programs aimed at reducing the demand for commercial sex acts. However, several NGOs, including the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, sponsored demand reduction programs targeting teenage males in some communities.

1F. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO REDUCE PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CHILD SEX TOURISM BY NATIONALS: As a destination country for child sex tourists, the Philippine government focused its limited resources on fighting child sex tourism inside the country.

1G. INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING TROOPS: The Philippines deployed a total of 626 military and police personnel in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Before deploying troops to peacekeeping operations, the Department of National Defense and the PNP conducted seminars and training for peacekeepers, including a training module on trafficking in persons. The DFA also provided pre-departure orientation seminars to Foreign Service officers and other government personnel, including military and police, before being assigned abroad.

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